

Socio Economic Class Activity

The Scramble

1. Explain to participants that in this activity they will distribute the wealth and power of the world among themselves. This wealth is represented by the 100 pennies. There is only one rule: no participant may touch another member of the group at any time.

2. Arrange the room so that participants have a fairly large area to play the game. Have participants stand or sit in a circle and scatter the pennies evenly in the middle of the circle.

Withhold three participants from this part of the activity. Distribute mittens for some participants to wear but postpone discussion of reasons for this until debriefing. **Note:** To emphasize that some start off with more than others, consider giving three or four participants five extra pennies to begin with as well as providing them with special scooping shovels.

At the order of GO, have participants (except the three withheld) gather as many pennies as possible without touching one another. **Note:** Penalties for violations of this rule may be needed, such as removal from the game or payment to the person touched.

3. After all the pennies have been collected, have participants report their wealth to the class.

Record participants' names and number of pennies on a board or chart paper under three categories:

1) GREAT WEALTH AND POWER (those with six or more pennies—the smallest group);

2) SOME WEALTH AND POWER” (those with three to five pennies—the middle group); and

3) LITTLE WEALTH AND POWER (those with two or fewer pennies—the largest group).

4. Remind the group that these pennies represent their wealth and power in the world. The amount they possess will affect their capacity to satisfy their needs (e.g., basic education, adequate food and nutrition, good health care, adequate housing) and wants (e.g. higher education, cars, computers, toys, television and other luxury items). Those participants with six or more pennies will have their basic “needs” and most of their “wants” met; those with three to five pennies will have their basic needs met, and those with two or fewer pennies will have

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difficulty surviving due to disease, lack of education, malnutrition, and inadequate shelter.

5. Tell participants that they may, if they wish, give pennies to others; however, they are not required to do so. Tell them that those who do share will be honored as “DONORS,” with their names placed on the board. Allow a few minutes for participants to redistribute the pennies if they wish. Then ask for the names of those who gave away pennies and the amount each gave. List them on the board or chart entitled “DONORS.” Ask if anyone changed category as a result of giving or receiving pennies and record these shifts on the chart.

Debriefing the Activity

Note: Debriefing is an essential step in this process.

Draw on the following questions to promote a productive discussion. Be sure to devote time to a discussion of changes needed and changes undertaken.

- How did you feel about the way in which the pennies were acquired and distributed?
- Were you treated fairly?
- Did some people give pennies away? Did you give away or receive pennies? Why or why not? How did this feel?
- What determined whether or not people gave away pennies? Knowing what the pennies represented? Having one's name displayed? Feeling guilty? Something else?
- What aspects of this game represented how the world's wealth and power are distributed?
- What about the three participants assigned to groups? Were they fairly treated? Is what happened to them similar to what happens to people around the globe? What sorts of people? Is it just chance where we end up?
- What about the participants with mittens (and scooping shovels)? What kinds of people do the mittens (and scooping shovels) represent? What group did they end up in?
- How did the members of the different groups feel about their situation? Did the recommended plan for fair distribution reflect whether the group had more or fewer pennies?
- After playing this game do you have a better understanding of the situation or attitude of poor people/nations? Of the situation or attitude of wealthy people/nations?
- Why were some people given more votes than others? Was this an accurate representation of those with more or less power in the world?

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- Who are the “haves” and the “have nots” in the world today? Which countries are the “haves” and the “have nots”? Who are the “haves” and “have nots” in our country today? In our state or community? Why?
- Should the “haves” be concerned about the situation of the “have nots?” For what reasons? economic? moral/religious? political? Why might the “haves” give money or resources to the “have nots”? Is this a way to solve the problems of poverty?
- What might the “have-nots” do to improve their situation? What are some actions that “have-nots” have taken around the globe and at home to address the inequalities of wealth and power?
- Do you think there should be a redistribution of wealth and power throughout the world? Why or why not? If yes, how would you propose to accomplish this? What principles would guide your proposals for change?
- Do you think there should be a redistribution of wealth and power in this country? Why or why not? If yes, how would you propose to accomplish this? What principles would guide your proposals for change?